

APRIL "2000" LEAD SAFETY REPORT



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Horizon Mercy Head case manager Ms. Kathy Kelly spoke of the Marti program and how it insures treatment for children who are screened and who's results are 20% and higher lead blood levels, as well as patient follow up for such children. One major issue is the lack of communication with the Primary Care Physicians (PCP) and the health plan provider, and not knowing where the children, who are at 20% or more lead detection levels. The Horizon Mercy health program has desire to create a better communication with the WIC program who now have lead safety testing for all children who come in with there parents to get WIC. The WIC program has started this procedure of lead testing in order to keep track of such children and also obtain treatment for those with high lead blood levels. There are additional plans to obtain school participation to educate parents of the importance of lead screening for children and keep a record/data base sheet of lead testing results. This record database will contain the children's names, date of testing, ages and the addresses of the children who are tested. The lead prevention program has plans to have a Health community meeting in June and July of 2000. This meeting will be provided to inform the public of Lead poisoning and how important it is to have children tested. If the children are detected with lead poisoning blood levels they must receive follow up treatments. Other health issues will be discussed as well. These meeting will be held in the Newark public and private school systems.

It is of vital importance for the doctors of the children to communicate with the health insurance companies and the New Jersey Physician Lead Advisory Committee. On several occasions children have been detected with high lead blood levels and treated but neglected to contact the Horizon Mercy Health plan of the treatment.

Ms. Kelly informed us of the fact that for many years there has only been one lead safety inspector for the City of Newark. However there has been an increase in inspectors recently, but do the long period of time when there was only one inspector it has cause an enormous back up of cases and a abundance of work to catch up on. All Counties are to submit Blood Lead Levels to the Health Programs to assist in development of community education programs. The role of quality management's is to track, tend and evaluate data. Development for improvement measures for successful outcomes.

There were also other speakers at the Lead Safety meeting of great importance such as Medical Director with Americaid, Dr. William Pawluk, Horizon Mercy Coordinator of Quality Mgt. Marti-Gonzalez Turner and Managed Healthcare System, Inc. Medical Director Dr. Susan Beane.

The effects of Lead poisoning are more serious than many are aware of. A child with lead poisoning can virtually effect every system in the body, and often occurs with no distinctive symptoms. Lead poisoning can damage a child's central nervous system, Kidneys, and reproductive system and at higher levels can cause comas, convulsions, and death. Even low levels of lead are harmful and are associated with decreased intelligence, impaired neurobehavioral development stature, growth, and impaired hearing acuity. However there has been an improvement in the percentage of U.S. children with Lead levels. According to the most recent National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey the percentage of U.S. children with elevated blood lead levels has dropped from 88.2% in the late 1970's to 4.4% in the early 1990's.

The best way to avoid your child from getting lead poisoning is to have your home tested for lead paint. Other precautions you can take is to make sure your child washes his or her hands frequently like before meals, snacks, naps and at bed time as well as after play time. An additional method of protection is to give your child meals high in iron and calcium. You should also always let the water run for at least one minute before using for any reason. Always keep your child away from peeling paint and clean windows, ceilings and floor in your home at least one a week. For further information contact your local health department.

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